

REMARKS

Claims 1-9, 12-14, and 18-29 are pending in the application. Claims 1-9, 12-14, and 18 are currently amended. Claims 10, 11, and 15-17 are currently cancelled. Claims 19-29 have been withdrawn from consideration. Applicants respectfully request for allowance of claims 1-9, 12-14, and 18.

Claim Objections

Claims 7-18 are objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim must depend from a claim in the alternative, and a multiple dependent claim cannot depend from another multiple dependent claim. In response, claims 7-9, 12-14, and 18 have been rewritten in non-multiple dependent form, and claims 10, 11, and 15-17 are cancelled. As such, Applicants respectfully request that the objections be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 USC 102

Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent No. 5,954,935 to Neumeister et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Neumeister").

Independent claim 1, as amended, is directed to apparatus for treating a raw feed containing ions. With reference to FIG. 2, for example, the apparatus comprises an electromembrane device (e.g., the dotted box) having means for conveying the raw feed thereto and treated feed

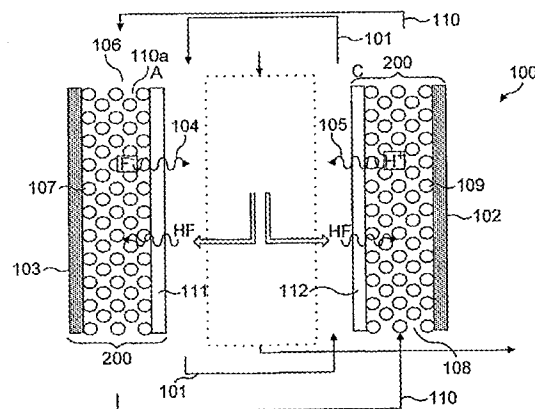


FIG. 2

therefrom (e.g., a liquid stream indicated by an arrow to the dotted box and another arrow pointing away from the box), an anode (e.g., 102), a cathode (e.g., 103), an electrolyte solution and means for conveying at least one stream of the electrolyte solution between the cathode and anode (e.g., a liquid stream indicated by arrow 110) which are arranged to apply an electric current to drive electrodeionisation in the electromembrane device for removal of the ions from the raw feed into a concentrate (e.g., a liquid stream indicated by an arrow 101), wherein the raw feed is not in direct contact with the anode or the cathode; and means for transferring selected ions (e.g., 104 and 105) from the electrolyte solution into the concentrate upon application of the current.

Applicants respectfully submit that Neumeister fails to teach the claim limitation “the raw feed is not in direct contact with the anode or the cathode.” As shown in FIG. 1 of Neumeister, the raw feed 6 flows through the cathode chamber 1 and anode chamber 3, sequentially, and therefore is in direct contact with the cathode and anode. *See, col. 3, lines 36-48.* Since the raw feed often contains corrosive compounds, such as hydrofluoric acid, the direct contact between the raw feed and the electrodes is likely to cause serious erosion of the electrodes.

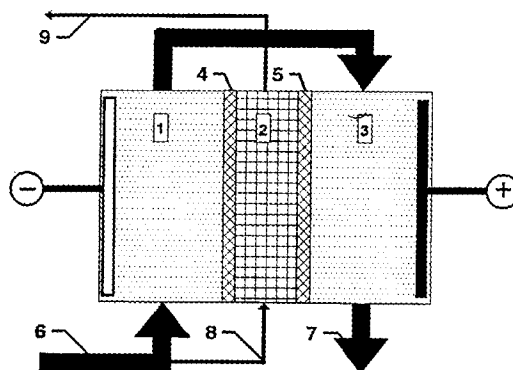
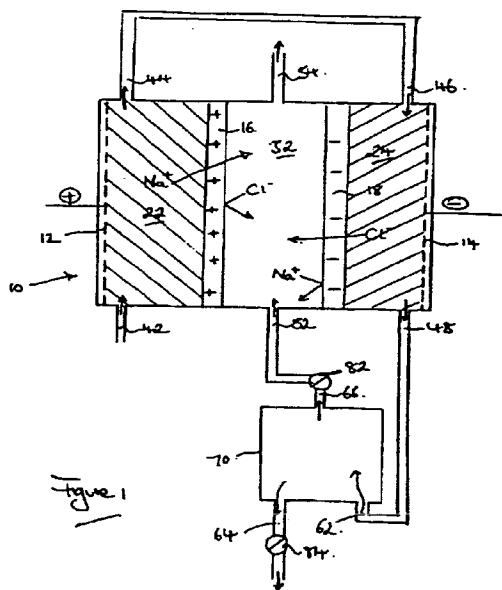


Fig. 1

As such, claim 1, as amended, is not anticipated by Neumeister. Claims 2-6 depend from claim 1 and include all the limitations recited therein. Accordingly, claims 2-6 are not anticipated by Neumeister, due to their dependency from claim 1.

Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by GB Patent No. 2,311,999A to Emery et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Emery").

Applicants respectfully submit that Emery fails to teach the claim limitation "*the raw feed is not in direct contact with the anode or the cathode.*" As shown in FIG. 1 of Emery, the raw feed flows through the first diluting compartment 22 and the second diluting compartment 24 in direct contact with anode 12 and cathode 14. Since the raw feed often contains corrosive compounds, such as hydrofluoric acid, the direct contact between the raw feed and the electrodes is likely to cause serious erosion of the electrodes.



As such, claim 1, as amended, is not anticipated by Emery. Claims 2-6 depend from claim 1 and include all the limitations recited therein. Accordingly, claims 2-6 are not anticipated by Emery, due to their dependency from claim 1.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have made an earnest attempt to place this application in an allowable form. In view of the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are drawn to a novel subject matter, patentably distinguishable over the prior art of record. Examiner is therefore, respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejections.

Should Examiner deem that any further clarification is desirable, Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below listed telephone number.

Applicants do not believe that any additional fee is due, but as a precaution, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional, necessary fee to deposit account number 50-4244.

Respectfully submitted,

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